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ABSTRACT

This study evaluates contract services in reference and printed materials of the Maryland Interlibrary Organization (MILO)-Central (a network of public, county, and academic libraries) as performed by the County Services Department. Procedures and record-keeping processes--i.e., organization, basic operations, and request volume--are analyzed from data collected during visits to MILO-Central and cooperating libraries. Statistics show MILO-Central remains consistent in request fill rate turnaround time, but fill rate is lower than other networks. The study notes the need for greater interrelationship and sharing among system members. It recommends review of statistics for management decisions and operating procedures for problem area and duplicate efforts, as well as a cost-effectiveness study. Fifteen specific areas are listed for further analysis. (KP)

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MARYLAND INTERLIBRARY ORGANIZATION:

MILO-CENTRAL

Review and Recommendation

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Submitted To

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I. Background.

The Division of Library Development and Services of the Maryland State Department of Education has contracted with the Enoch Pratt Free Library to supply interlibrary loan services to the public libraries of the state of Maryland since 1960. These services provided not only for the lending of print and non-print materials but also for reference services to local libraries. Under this arrangement, libraries could refer to the Pratt County Services Department those requests for materials which they were not able to fill.

Major improvements occurred in the system in 1965, when teletypes were installed in the county libraries, thus facilitating communication with Pratt, and in 1968 when the McKeldin Library at the University of Maryland, College Park, became a backup to Pratt Library, so that referrals for materials requests unfilled at Pratt could be forwarded to McKeldin.

The designation of the Central Library of the Pratt Library System as the State Library Resource Center by the Maryland General Assembly in 1971 further enhanced the network by making available state appropriated funds for the operation of the SLRC.

Since 1974, several major changes have occurred in the network. The dedicated line teletype machines were replaced in both the SLRC and the four metropolitan area county libraries with more modern TWX equipment. In addition, these four metropolitan county libraries--Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Prince Georges, and Montgomery--agreed to serve as backup resource centers for the SLRC.

Most recently, the development of Microcat I, a union microfilm listing of holdings of the Baltimore County Public Library, the State Library Resource Center, and the libraries of Towson State College, the University of Maryland, Baltimore Campus, and Essex Community College, has enlarged the holdings available to the county libraries. In addition, the Eisenhower Library, Johns Hopkins University, has joined the network as a backup resource for the SLRC. Finally, a change was made in the name of the SLRC. MILO, Maryland Interlibrary Organization, with headquarters at MILO-Central, Enoch Pratt Central Library, now reflects more adequately the concept of a true interlibrary network.

In May, 1976, this writer was hired as a consultant to evaluate the contract services of MILO-Central as performed by the County Services Department, to analyze its procedures and record-keeping, and to make recommendations regarding these areas. This request was based on the increasing volume of network traffic which MILO-Central must handle in the face of static staff and the need to achieve a higher fill rate. Although MILO-Central provides non-print materials, that service is treated as an entirely separate operation in terms of location, staff (although staff is included in the MILO-Central funding), supplies, etc. Thus, this report will concern itself only with the requests for printed materials and reference service which are handled by the County Services Department at MILO-Central. Data was collected during an intensive visit for one week to MILO-Central in late August, plus on-site visits at McKeldin Library, University of Maryland, and Baltimore County Public Library.

II. Organization.

The County Services Department has been responsible for the daily

processing of the requests channeled to MILO-Central. Until 1974, this department was under the jurisdiction of the Extension Division. At that time, it was removed from the Extension Division and placed under the administrative control of the Chief of the Central Library.

MILO-Central is allocated a total of twenty-six positions, twenty-two of which are funded by the state, and four by the city. Until September, 1976, two additional positions were funded by the Federal Government under the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA); however, funding for these positions has now evaporated and the positions have ceased to exist. Five of the twenty-two state positions are allocated to Audio-Visual Services and one to the Cataloging Department. Furthermore, one of the state funded positions and two of the city funded positions are vacant. Thus, in MILO-Central, there are currently 16.5 FTE's to cope with over 110,000 requests per year.[1]

The 16.5 FTE's can further be broken down by function within the department:

1.	Department Head	1 FTE (professional)
2.	Reference Services	5 FTE (3 professional)
3.	Teletype	3 FTE
4.	Search	6.5 FTE
5.	Circulation and Transshipment	1 FTE

The head of MILO-Central County Services Department had requested an additional 3 FTE state-funded positions for 1977 (two professional, one clerical); however, these were not funded.

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[1]One of the 26 allocated positions is only half-time.

III. Basic Operation.

MILO-Central is primarily responsible for processing materials requests, both book and serial, and reference requests which are directed to it by county libraries and regional resource centers which have not been able to fulfill them. For book requests, items identified by the requesting library with a Pratt call number are simply searched on the shelves. Unidentified items must be searched in the Pratt catalogs. If not located, they must be verified further before being referred to a backup library. Requests which are candidates for referral to a metropolitan area library are checked in Microcat in addition to the book and/or film catalogs of the metro area libraries. Material in circulation at Pratt or at a backup resource library may be reserved if there is an adequate Do Not Send Later (DNSL) date to allow ample time for a successful fill.

For serials requests, every attempt is made to locate the material in the Pratt Central Library. Once located, the article is photocopied and dispatched to the requesting library. If the serial is not located in Pratt Central, the request is referred to McKeldin after a check of the print-out of the serials held by the University of Maryland, or referred to any other of the various libraries for which serials lists are held if the item is located in them.

Subject requests are treated separately. For popular and frequently requested topics, a file of material is maintained in MILO-Central which may be able to satisfy the request. If not, the resources of Pratt are at the disposal of the reference search staff.

In addition to the more than 60,000 contract requests from the county libraries, MILO-Central is also responsible for handling requests from the Pratt branches for books, serials, and subject requests. The same procedures

are followed for branch requests as contract requests.

MILO-Central also operates a Books-by-Mail service for shut-ins in Baltimore, providing identical services for this program as for branch and contract requests.

In addition, all out-of-state ALA interlibrary loan requests are sent to MILO-Central for processing. Those in-state requests which are non-contract, non-branch requests are also counted in the ALA category.

Finally, MILO-Central is responsible for transshipment of items returned to libraries from which they were not borrowed. All items of this nature are sent to MILO-Central where they are sorted and sent on their way.

If the statistics for the past four years are analyzed, it is evident that contract requests account for approximately 56% of the total requests received by MILO-Central (See Table 1). Total fill rate for contract requests has remained relatively stable for the past four years at about 52%. This figure includes referrals filled by McKeldin, and, for 1975-76, also includes requests filled by the metropolitan area libraries (since December, 1975) and colleges (since May, 1976).

The study undertaken by Sylvia Goodstein showed an average of 62.7% fill for six weeks from October 24-December 10, 1966.[2] However, it is significant to note that the volume of requests has increased more than two and one-half times since that study.[3] The Warner study in 1969 sampled requests in two separate time periods and found about a 60% fill rate.[4] However, this fill rate included items filled by the Eastern Shore Area Library before processing by Pratt and also includes reserves filled.

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[2]Sylvia Goodstein, "An Analysis of the County Services Program of the Enoch Pratt Library," 1968?

[3]The 1966 volume was 40,389 requests. See Table 1 for current figures.

[4]Edward S. Warner, "Maryland Interlibrary Loan Network Loan Requests: System and Units Analysis," 1969.

TABLE 1

REQUESTS RECEIVED

	1972-73	1973-74	1974-75	1975-76
CONTRACT				
Author/Title	45,617	46,463	46,975	48,679
Serial	5,107	5,394	5,628	5,949
Subject	2,531	3,935	6,602	7,190
TOTAL	53,255	55,792	59,205	61,818
BRANCH				
Author/Title	45,307	33,820	36,917	39,022
Serial	117	373	440	575
Subject	2,650	3,336	3,197	4,045
TOTAL	48,074	37,529	40,554	43,642
BOOKS BY MAIL				
Author/Title	2,517	3,633	3,648	2,569
Serial		20	21	42
Subject	542	593	593	406
TOTAL	3,059	4,246	4,138	3,017
ALA				
Author/Title		788	808	847
Serial		657	599	742
Subject		7	4	40
TOTAL	1,276	1,452	1,411	1,629
GRAND TOTALS	105,878	99,019	105,308	110,106

TABLE 2

DISPOSITION OF REQUESTS

	1972-73	1973-74	1974-75	1975-76
CONTRACT				
Filled Pratt				19,722
Filled Pratt Xerox				3,792
TOTAL	28,071	28,689	31,078	23,514
McKeldin				5,425
Metro				2,993
Colleges				71
TOTAL				8,489
Reserved				8,245
Not Owned				13,444
Other				8,126
BRANCH				
Filled				18,514
Reserved				3,991
Other				19,769
McKeldin		1,000	895	1,368
BOOKS BY MAIL				
Filled Pratt				1,666
Filled Pratt Xerox				3
TOTAL	2,500	3,176	2,992	1,669
McKeldin				23
Reserved				
Not Owned				402
Other				923
ALA				
Filled Pratt				195
Filled Pratt Xerox				438
TOTAL	581	567	526	633
Reserved				
Not Owned				394
Other				602
MCKELDIN				
Referred	7,768	10,637	12,209	16,681
Filled	3,222	5,210	5,560	6,781
% Filled	41.5	49	45.5	40.7

The immediate fill rate at Pratt, i.e., those requests which did not need a reserve placed, was 39.7% for the sample. The October, 1975, statistical summary indicated a 36% Pratt fill rate.[5] Both of these figures are generally consistent with the 1975-76 38% immediate fill rate. Total fill rate for Pratt and McKeldin in the Warner study was 45.9%, in the October, 1975, study 47%, both somewhat under the average of 52% now being met.[6]

Statistics for fill rates of other comparable library networks are notably lacking in library literature. However, a 1969 study of the New York State Interlibrary Loan System (NYSILL), a network using a similar referral system, showed a 47% fill rate at the New York State Library (comparable to the 38-39% at MILO-Central) and a total of 64% fill when referral libraries (e.g., Cornell and Columbia) were included.[7] WILS (the Wisconsin Interlibrary System) and MINITEX (the Minnesota system) report fill rates of 79-82% and 75% respectively.[8] However, 75% of the requests these two systems receive are for periodical articles, compared with the almost 80% monographic request rate to MILO-Central. The fill rate for all types of requests for the Iowa Library Information Teletype Exchange (ILITE) is reported to be 71% for 1975-76. Thus, the Maryland Interlibrary Organization is not meeting the fill rate of other comparable networks.

There are no current statistics available for turn-around time for materials requested from Pratt. The Goodstein study indicated an average

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[5]"Maryland Library Network: Statistical Summary of Interlibrary Loan Use (October 1975)."

[6]Warner includes satisfied reserves in his overall percentage figures for both Pratt and McKeldin. However, reserves are not counted in the fill rates for either Pratt or McKeldin in present practice.

[7]Rolland E. Stevens, "A Study of Interlibrary Loan," College and Research Libraries 35 (September, 1974) 336-343. Stevens is here citing Nelson Associates' 1969 study "Interlibrary Loan in New York State."

[8]Alice E. Wilcox and Nancy H. Marshall, "MINITEX and WILS: Responses to Access Needs," RQ 13 (Summer, 1974) 299-307.

of two to four days for fulfillment of all types of requests which could be immediately filled (i.e., there was no need for a reserve, or the request caused no complications). An analysis of an identified request received from a county library in the afternoon shows that it will currently take a minimum of two full days for the request to leave the Pratt library (assuming that there are no backlogs anywhere). An unidentified request or a request not in the Pratt library will take a minimum of three days before it is dispatched further. The statistics for serials indicate that an additional turnaround time of up to one week is not at all uncommon.

Thus, overall statistics indicate that MILO-Central has remained relatively consistent in both fill rate and turnaround time over the years (although turnaround time for an unidentified request is increasing); however, improvement could be made in fill rate in comparison to other networks.

IV. Observations and Recommendations.

The obvious goal of a state-wide interlibrary network such as the Maryland Interlibrary Organization should be to achieve maximal fill rate for all types of requests in minimal time. Intertwined with this admirable goal must be the pragmatic realization that a 100% fill rate will never be reached in any network. It must also be understood that members of a network must interrelate with each other and share in a partnership, rather than rely solely on one or two members.

In addition, the cost-effectiveness of a network must be viewed. Can a network, even though increasing volume of requests substantially, continue to incur ever greater needs for funds, especially if total satisfaction rate does not rise and turnaround time increases? Can tasks now absorbed by MILO-Central be passed on to the county libraries and other network members with no increase in cost to those members? How can MILO-Central become a more efficient and cost-effective organization?

All procedures need to be examined for "logjams" and for duplication of effort. Statistics need to be scrutinized to determine if they are valuable for management decisions and aid in spotting trends and patterns of use. Elizabeth Ruffin, Head of the County Services Department, is aware of the problems facing her department and may be analyzing some of the areas suggested below as targets for improvement. Not noted are the many positive changes she has already made.

The intent of these observations and recommendations is not to set down fiats. Rather, it is to raise questions, point out possible solutions, and leave any implementation to those working with the network. Analysis should be directed to the following areas of concern:

1. County forms.

Could these be revised to reflect the order needed for teletyping, thus enabling the teletype operator to transcribe more quickly without searching for information? Is it necessary to include the reader's name on the information side of the card, especially if the card is to be used as a self-addressed card? In order to foster good habits at the county and regional libraries, the space for verification should be increased. Perhaps abbreviations for commonly used tools such as BIP, CBI, FB, and NUC could be listed so that the requesting library would need only to circle verification source. Additionally, a space could be provided for year of tool searched and page located. Although a 3 x 5 form may be preferable for existing library files and for mailing purposes, a larger form such as a 4 x 6 or even a 5 x 8 would provide more space for information needed. The different color format for each request type is desirable for quick identification and should be retained.

2. Teletype transmission.

A top priority should be replacement of the outmoded, outdated, and

impossibly slow teletype machines with TWX equipment. If possible, this should be accomplished through state funding. TWX equipment in all county libraries would substantially increase capabilities for interlibrary communication and could give an entirely different complexion to the network. TWX equipment would also enable current county teletype operators to prepare more accurate tapes. At the present time, the quality of the transmission is substandard, both for teletype and for TWX, but especially teletype. Part of this can be attributable to the fact that the teletype operators must transmit live. However, one should expect some reasonable consistency without the tremendous amount of garbled transmission currently received. Totally accurate transmissions are too rare. The incorrect letter or number can add costly delays to fulfillment of a request. Teletype operators must be encouraged to provide more accurate transmissions. Certainly TWX equipment would aid in this goal. If TWX equipment is an absolute impossibility, it would at least help to update the teletype equipment to automatic send/receive. This would at least enable some correction of errors. However, all transmittal operators, both TWX and teletype, must improve the quality of the typing of requests sent to MILO-Central.

In terms of message format, could "any edition" (ANYED), "no substitute" (NOSUB), and "reserve" (RES) be dropped from transmission since they seem to be automatic? Thus, any edition would be sent unless TEDO (this edition only) was specified, a reserve placed when NORES was not indicated, and a substitute sent only if SUB were indicated. This step alone would cut transmission time.

Also, is it necessaryfor the Pratt teletype operators to send the monthly "Books To Be Added to Pratt Collections?" If libraries use this information, then it possibly could be retained. However, if little or no use is made of it, then it should be dropped and a printed list substituted.

3. Training.

Many of the current teletype operators suffer because of inadequate training. Understandably, it is probably impossible for county headquarter libraries to devote the time and attention needed for proper training. However, good training on the local level should eliminate many of the problems encountered on receipt of transmission at MILO-Central. The workshops and meetings planned by MILO-Central should aid in solving some difficulties. However, MILO-Central needs to be more involved in training on the local level. Ideally, each new teletype operator on the county level should be sent to spend a day with the MILO-Central teletype staff. By observing the MILO-Central operation, being taught proper procedures, and becoming aware of the problems resulting from faulty transmissions, each teletype operator would hopefully be more inspired to do a conscientious job. In addition, the teletype supervisor at MILO-Central, a highly competent individual, should be able to get out to each county at least once a year to discuss common problems and provide follow-up training. Finally, a network training and operation manual, specifically delineating teletype procedures and message format, would be a most useful tool for all teletype operators. Development of such a tool should be a high priority. While it would not substitute for the personal training and follow-up visits, it would serve as a basic reference when teletype problems arise.

Training should not be limited to teletype operators. It is vital for MILO-Central to provide continual in-service training on a regular periodic basic for all county personnel involved with the interlibrary network. For example, reference librarians could be trained to consolidate six requests for books on the same subject into one general subject request. Workshops will assist in this goal. But beyond that, the county libraries must understand the routines and the problems of MILO-Central. This understanding

should enable the counties to interface more effectively with MILO-Central and increase network effectiveness.

4. Verification from the Requesting Library.

The county libraries must assume more responsibility for verification. A startling number of book requests come into MILO-Central unverified. These requests consume enormous amounts of MILO-Central staff time as they attempt to determine whether or not the items exist. The problem is even more apparent with serials, as citations are often incorrect in title, volume, date, or paging, all causing delays in filling the request. Could the network consider only requests with some sort of citation? This could include "patron's bibliography" or "Today show," etc., along with standard citations such as BIP, CBI, etc. However, a citation of any sort would enable the MILO-Central staff to decrease the amount of their searching. While such a hard-nosed attitude might lessen the overall number of requests, it might increase the overall fill rate by eliminating those requests which cannot be filled because of vagueness of information, too general information, or nonexistence and reduce turnaround time by cutting the MILO-Central staff's amount of searching, thus enabling faster fill or switching. The volume of requests per year to MILO-Central alone indicates the need for positive verification.

Positive and complete verification should be encouraged. Currently verification tends to be negative (NBIP, NCBI, NFB) and incomplete (no volume, year, or page given when a verification is mentioned). A complete verification, such as source, year volume, and page (e.g., BIP 76 v.1:368) would cut MILO-Central time. If there were any garbled transmission or spelling error, the exact identification could be speedily and accurately checked. In the new interlibrary loan manual being planned (and much needed), concrete examples of positive verification should be provided. Good verification should be a constant goal.

Microcat use must also be encouraged for verification. Could every request not indicating a Microcat search simply be sent back as unfilled? Microcat has tremendous potential for the network, especially as it will exist in its second and third incarnations. It will be inexcusable for any library not to use it as the basic tool for searching and verification.

5. Request Eligibility.

In addition to the problem of inadequate verification, the network suffers from the problem of obviously unfillable requests of the sort that a major resource library and its backups cannot realistically be expected to provide (e.g. paperback Gothics, religious material, ephemera, books not yet published, etc.) and which serve to substantially reduce the fill rate. It is not realistic for the patron or the county library to expect a successful fill on this material. Could such requests be eliminated from MILO-Central? For example, restrictions could be placed on the date of material so that items less than three months old would not even be considered on the network. A deeper philosophical question must be asked at this point. If patrons demand this sort of material, whose responsibility is it to collect it? Is it the county headquarters' responsibility, or the regional library's, or Enoch Pratt's? Or is it any library's responsibility to collect such material? The amount of TWX or teletype time for transmission of such requests, and the staff time at MILO-Central to search and possibly refer such requests must be considered. Would it be more cost-effective to spend $500-$1000 per county for such material in demand by patrons? Certainly elimination of such materials would increase the fill rate of MILO-Central and the backup libraries.

6. MILO-Central Searching.

MILO-Central requests unidentified in the Pratt catalog (or Microcat) are currently designated NPC. They are then sorted into candidates for

permanent file checking, full catalog checking, routing to the subject request department, popular literature checking, or query file checking. Those items receiving a full catalog check[9] which are not located are then checked in standard bibliographies such as BIP, FB, CBI, NUC, and PW. The full catalog check is a cumbersome and time-consuming check, involving three separate card catalogs as well as a recheck of the Pratt book catalog and supplements. While Pratt's internal problems were not investigated, it is obvious that this search alone will increase turnaround time for unidentified requests because of the lack of a unified card catalog, yet it is out of MILO-Central's jurisdiction to improve. However, several other recommendations and suggestions for departmental review can be made here, some of which may again already be under consideration:

a. If unidentified requests not searched in the perm file need a full bibliographic check, is there a more desirable place to begin this search rather than the cumbersome Pratt catalogs? Ideally, a terminal connected to a data base such as OCLC would give ready access to verification of over two million items. Even during slow response times, an OCLC title search rarely consumes more than twelve seconds. Although initial cost of installation may be high, in the long run such terminal access should prove cost-effective due to the greater number of searches which could be performed. Additionally, benefits would accrue to MILO-Central as Maryland libraries join the data base since locational symbols could be ascertained. OCLC is also developing an interlibrary loan subsystem. Access to this subsystem would enable MILO-Central to go out of state for those items desired by Maryland patrons without difficult and lengthy searching and with ease of communication. If OCLC proves unfeasible because of cost, then a microfiche retrieval system such as MARCfiche should be investigated. This system

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[9]Items not found in the perm file check are also submitted to a full catalog check.

would provide main entry verification much more quickly than searching the Pratt catalogs and standard bibliographic sources. The cost to MILO-Central would be no more than $200 per year plus the initial cost of a microfiche reader; however, the number of searches per searcher would surely increase and lead to greater productivity.

b. If the item is not found in the old class catalog by title, is it really worthwhile to keep on searching by author, especially if correct main entry has not been determined?

c. If it worthwhile to check the book catalogs after all three classed catalogs have been checked, especially if the original request indicated NPC? Apparently only about one in thirty is found.

d. If the item has been identified in Microcat, is it necessary to submit the request to the standard bibliographic check in BIP, etc?

e. Why is the LC call number indicated on requests checked in NUC? Is this call number ever used? If so, is the purpose valid?

f. Could there be a standardized location on the request form for making notations for ease of referring to locations or sources a searcher had checked? Could there even be a form stapled to the request to indicate progress through the full check?

Search strategy must be examined carefully for streamlining of procedures if MILO-Central expects to keep pace with increased volume with a static staff. Since additional staff does not seem to be forthcoming, this is an immediate concern in order not to create unwieldy backlogs.

7. Serials Requests.

Slightly over 6% of total requests and 9.6% of all contract items requested are serials requests. Even though these requests comprise a small protio. of total requests, they are extremely time-consuming. They

also pose a substantial number of problems. Turnaround time for filling serials requests is unacceptable, as many requests are not filled until after the DNSL date has passed. Much of this can be attributed to the inadequate resources the clerk involved in searching serials requests must consult. For example, the Maryland Union List of Serials, now almost ten years old, still serves a basic locational purpose. However, it is hardly reliable because of its age. Before any work with serials can be done effectively on the network level, there must be a revision of the Union List of Serials. A serials list needs to be available just for Pratt holdings as well. Perhaps some pressure could be applied by County Services staff to help make this a reality. Finally, communication must be improved with McKeldin so that the serials clerk has as current a list from McKeldin as possible. Print-outs must be sent on a regular basis from McKeldin. The overall quality of the requests should be improved also. Incorrect citations with no verifications abound. The local county libraries must assume more responsibility for checking citations. In addition, the serials assistant's work methods should be closely observed and supervised to determine if there can be a streamlining of procedures in her work, especially since her workload has increased and the physical distances she must cover are overwhelming. Could less effort be expended in checking on the existence of a title, with a check of the McKeldin list first and then the old Union List of Serials? Could the serials assistant rely more on the visible file for Pratt holdings? When a title is found at Pratt which is not in the Union List of Serials, could it be added to the Maryland List or, better yet, to the McKeldin list? The serials assistant has an excellent file started for serials available at McKeldin but not at Pratt. This is a positive time-saver. There should also be fewer checks for index verification. Index verification of citation should be done only as a last resort when all else has failed.

Although the McKeldin operation is a separate operation and is basically outside the scope of this report, it is necessary to add a few words regarding serials, especially because the turnaround time is highly unacceptable for serials requests, sometimes taking almost three weeks after referral. Although treatment by DNSL dates is not advisable, this could be one method to avoid backlogs. However, the more valid solution seems to be to give a higher priority to serials requests, working on at least some every day. In this way, the requests would not stack up as they do now.

8. Subject requests.

Could county libraries indicate the specific sources they have already searched for subject requests, including the pages consulted? In this way, the reference staff would not repeat steps already taken; however, they could consult, if necessary, the items already used for further clues. Information regarding subject requests needs to be expanded, a responsibility of the county libraries. It is a tribute to MILO-Central staff that the satisfaction rate of subject requests is high, especially considering the sketchy information often provided. Positive examples of excellent subject requests (e.g., Prince Georges) should be cited in the new manual.

The volume of contract subject requests has almost tripled in the last few years (4.8% in 1972-73; 11.6% in 1975-76). In addition, branch requests have almost doubled. In spite of this, the reference staff has coped admirably; however, without further help, they will not be able to continue this workload. If at all possible, the burden for filling branch subject requests should be put back on the regular Pratt reference staff, thus obviating the need for further MILO-Central reference staff and allowing a more leisurely and productive pace for MILO-Central subject requests. This move would also allow for some continued growth in the reference operation.

Also, all telephone reference service should be stopped. The telephone requests unnecessarily interrupt very busy people from this normal routines. The only subject requests to the MILO-Central reference staff should be by teletype or TWX. These telephone requests should be handled by the regular Pratt reference staff also.

Finally, there is a need to work on subject requests in a more methodical and chronological manner. Old requests should be cleared up weekly, not monthly as current practice. The subject requests should be frequently checked by the supervisor of this area to ascertain subject areas not receiving adequate and chronological treatment.

9. Charging Materials.

Is the current method of charging out and readying materials for shipment the most efficient? The Head of the County Services Department has evinced some interest in eliminating charging, since the individual county libraries recharge the books. If charging is dropped, will there be an adequate method of identifying overdues from Pratt? Although the step does seem repetitive, is it the only viable method to apply pressure to delinquent borrowers? Is there continued need for sorting by branch on the county level? Could the county libraries sort some of their own materials for further distribution?

10. Transshipment.

During the last four years, transshipment has increased over 30% (see Table 3). As a result, more time must be spent on transshipment, and room has been sorely cramped because of the mounds of books flowing into MILO-Central. Since this is not a direct network function, could responsibility possibly be shifted to a department such as Extension Services? If responsibility cannot be shifted, can transshipment at least occur in a location physically removed from MILO-Central? As transshipment increases,

TABLE 3

TRANSSHIPMENT

	1972-73	1973-74	1974-75	1975-76
Books from counties to Pratt		96,315	95,524	105,234
From counties to branches	112,358	15,880	40,060	62,050
From Pratt to counties	123,803	120,468	138,683	141,220
TOTAL	236,161	232,663	274,267	308,504

so will the crowding as well as possible confusion and mixup with those items being readied for shipment to county libraries. If responsibility for transshipment cannot be shifted to Extension Services, then perhaps at least the physical aspect of transshipment could be accomplished there, since there is more available space. In addition, transshipment should be removed from the teletype personnel for McKeldin and given to the regular transshipment clerk. This would at least slightly lighten the teletype personnel's load, and the duty would fall logically in with the current duties of the transshipment clerk.

11. Switching.

Currently, unless a metro area library or McKeldin is designated, switching is a highly subjective operation, consuming a great amount of professional time for review and examination. A more automatic switching routine should be developed so that requests are switched automatically to the metros if not located at Pratt, automatically switched to McKeldin if not located at the metros, and automatically switched to Johns Hopkins if not located at McKeldin. A more automatic switching routine would eliminate so much need for the time-consuming professional review, involve the backup libraries to a greater extent, and perhaps even located some isolated, unexpected material. If the burden of requests seemed too enormous to McKeldin and Johns Hopkins, perhaps parameters could be defined, e.g., omissions of certain categories of materials such as cookbooks, juvenile literature, or popular fiction, or imprints newer than six months.

In regards to switching to the metros, requests citing both Pratt and metro call numbers should be switched immediately if a shelf search does not locate the item at Pratt rather than proceeding through a lengthy verification procedure. MILO-Central must rely on the veracity of cited Microcat

call numbers. Incorrect citations should be infrequent, and, if found, relegated to the metro area library to whom the request has been switched to clear up. If a request indicates NPC (not at Pratt) but does cite metro call numbers, the item should be immediately switched without even bothering with a Pratt search. What percentage of items without a Pratt call number are located at Pratt? Is it not more within the concept of a network to rely more on the metro area libraries and the university and college libraries which are part of that network? In addition, more use should be made of Johns Hopkins. Understandably, they are still new to the network, but unfilled requests of all sorts should be switched to then until definite paramters are set. Such automatic switching could eliminate duplication of procedures and save both time and money.

Is it really justificable to report deferred requests each day to the county and regional libraries? It would save a substantial amound of teletype time per day if only filled, reserved, and final disposition of requests were reported to the libraries. Can the libraries not assume that requests will automatically be switched if the DNSL date allows?

12. Statistics.

The statistics collected by MILO-Central need to be analyzed carefully. They need to be analyzed to determine if there is any duplication; they need to be analyzed for effectiveness. They are also in need of dissemination. McKe.din needs to share its statistics with MILO-Central; MILO-Central needs to share its statistics in turn with the county libraries and the regionals on a regular, preferably monthly, basis. It is not that the wrong statistics are being kept; it is that they are used inefficiently, not publicized enough, and not used for effective management decisions and pressure application.

There is a need for a monthly reporting of how many requests originated

with each county, what type of requests these were, and how many requests of each type were filled for each county. The same statistics should be cumulated and tabulated for inclusion in an annual report to be distributed to each and every member library in the network.

This type of statistical reportage would give a more accurate picture of county use of MILO. Is one county typically low in fill rate? Perhaps this county would need better training in verification or teletype operation or in searching of patron requests. Is one county consistently high? Analysis could be made of what that county is doing right for communication to other counties. Does one county have very few subject requests? Encouragement could be given to submit more requests or field work could be done with reference librarians to aid in interview strategy or publicity. Areas of concern could be pinpointed and analyzed through these statistics. A certain amount of peer pressure could also be applied. The library which sees it consistently has the least number of a type of request or the lowest fill rate may be shamed into servicing its patrons better.

Similar statistics should be kept by each referral library and submitted to MILO-Central for inclusion in the annual report. In addition, all libraries in the metro-area and in Microcat should record fills (by county) to be submitted to MILO-Central. It is important for MILO-Central to determine what percentage of referrals are filled, and by whom. Is one of the backup libraries consistently a leader in fills? Is any single library receiving too many switches? Again, collection of these statistics will enable management at MILO-Central to make intelligent rational decisions regarding the network's future.

Transshipment should be recorded and broken down by county. This figure too should be annually tabulated and distributed to the counties. And subject requests too should be analyzed by area and turnaround time.

The percentage of filled reserves should be recorded. An item placed on reserve is not now included in network fill rate, even though estimates indicate that over 50% of items reserved at Pratt eventually reach the patron. Assuming a 50% satisfaction rate on the 13.3% reserved items from 1975-76, it can easily be seen that total network fill rate would have immediately increased from 51.8% to approximately 58.5%, a figure much more tolerable for a network fill rate. These statistics could easily be kept by the clerk at MILO-Central who handles the reserves, since he is totally responsible for placing and removing reserves at Pratt. There is also a need for reserves filled by metros, McKeldin, and Johns Hopkins to be added to the total fill rate. If a reserve is placed at one of these libraries, the statistic still is recorded officially as a NIL (Not in Library), even though the request may ultimately be satisfied.

Additionally, the "Other" category should be broken down into Material in Circulation (MIC), Non-Circulating (NC), and Resubmit (RS), etc. Valuable trends can be noted from such statistics. Is the proportion of NC items increasing? Inquiries can be made as to why such a trend is developing. Are patrons asking for too much reference type material, or are libraries placing unrealistic restrictions upon circulation of their materials?

Finally, could some of the burden of record-keeping be placed on the counties? Could they at least divide by type of request submitted? Ideally, some day the counties will be able to keep such excellent and accurate statistics that MILO-Central will need only to cumulate and tabulate. Certainly the counties must begin to assume some more responsibility if they are going to be participating as viable members of the network.

McKeldin statistics too should be observed carefully for percentage and trends. This implies that McKeldin will send their statistics to MILO-Central on a regular basis. For the past few years, for example, the McKeldin

fill rate has been declining. However, the missing rate has been increasing. Are these two figures interrelated? Scrupulous examination of statistics across the board must be conducted to ascertain the success and needs of the network.

13. MILO-Central Staffing.

Generally, there is little to comment on regarding staffing. Classification levels of staff seem adequate, with the exception of the teletype supervisor who should be reclassified to a Grade 5; the steps to her reclassification are even now under way. With streamlined procedures, staff levels should be adequate if all allocated vacant positions are filled. However, if volume of traffic in the network continues to increase, consideration will need to be given to adding personnel. Unless subject requests increase dramatically, any additional personnel should be clerical and placed in critical areas such as teletype, bibliographic searching, or serials requests. As previously mentioned, the person in cataloging should be returned to MILO-Central headquarters. Training seemed adequate; however, bibliographic verifiers need additional training to avoid being so routine in their searching (e.g. always checking Forthcoming Books, even though the request has a 1965 imprint). On a positive note, MILO-Central is fortunate to have a staff so dedicated as the individuals observed.

14. Teletype Requests.

An enormous amount of time is spent measuring, tearing, and stapling the received teletype requests. It is expensive to pay a Grade 2 clerk for 3 1/2 hours of tearing and measuring per day, especially when so much other work is piling up. Is there a perforated pre-measured paper on the market? If not, could there be further investigation of equipping all the transmittal equipment with a vertical line feed so that at least the measuring would be unnecessary?

15. Philosophy of Network.

Can the role of Pratt in the network be more adequately defined? Will Pratt and MILO-Central continue to be the party of first resort or should they perform a function more related to that of a clearinghouse? Past philosophy has viewed Pratt as part of a pyramid beginning with the county libraries and proceeding through McKeldin. (Figure 1) As requests have proceeded through channels, they have finally reached the ultimate resource--MILO-Central--and only a few referred to McKeldin.

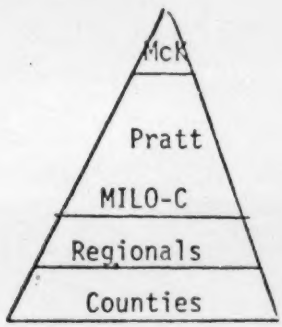

Fig. 1

Current practice finds Pratt still as part of a pyramid, but with an inverted pyramid placed on top. As a result of this practice, Pratt (MILO-Central) not only must receive the request, but process the request, search it, verify it, and determine the next disposition of the request. Scrutiny of this inverted pyramid reveals a narrow gap through which requests must pass, a gap which could easily create a bottleneck.

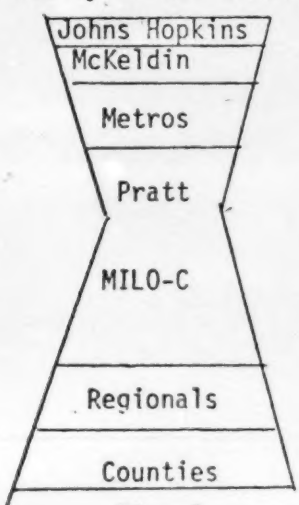

Fig. 2

Ideally, Pratt should achieve a role as MILO-Central, the hub of an active network around which all the action revolves:

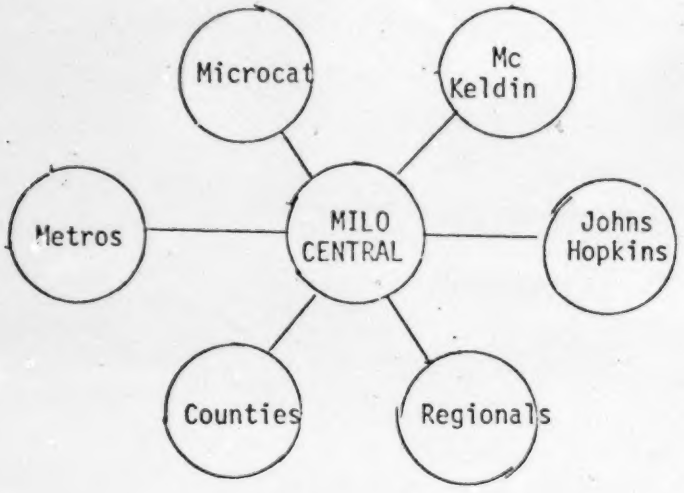

Fig. 3

Under this philosophy, MILO-Central would act more as a clearinghouse, supplying material if it was readily and quickly available; if not, referring it speedily to other members of the network to meet the continuing goal of uniting patron and material.

The State of Maryland and the MILO Advisory Committee must determine the role of MILO-Central. However, with the developments of Microcat on the state level, and networks such as OCLC on the national level, as well as other means of rapid access to locations of materials, reliance on one primary source for materials becomes hopelessly outmoded.

With MILO functioning as a true network, no longer would fill rate depend primarily on Pratt. No longer would verification depend totally on Pratt. No longer would communication depend totally on Pratt. Because of more interdependence and sharing of resources, network fill rate could improve, verification could improve, communication would improve. And most importantly, MILO-Central would be more manageable, enabling planning to be done, goals to be set, and effective decision-making to be accomplished.